

... come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live;
and I will make an everlasting covenant
with you ... Isaiah 55:3



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LESSON XXVII: Attitudes and Emotions

An attitude is literally a stance, a posture, an orientation. It is a point of view which we choose for the moment; therefore, our attitudes reflect more than any other quality the *nowness* of our being. They are related directly to our consciousness; they reflect what we choose to hold in consciousness with respect to all that we confront. An attitude, because it relates to the mind and will as well as to the spirit, is one of the clearest, most immediate indicators that man is a soul, a spiritual being.

If we endeavor to study the antecedents of our attitudes and the ways in which they may be changed, we find that the psychology of attitudes is extremely complex. Nevertheless, three items are eminently clear. First, our attitudes are a matter of our own immediate choices. Second, attitudes clearly affect our behavior and subsequently the experiences that we are to meet. And third, there can be no doubt that many of our decisions are based on the attitudes being held at the moment of choice. Thus, we may understand the effectiveness of commercials in the media and of the appeals of politicians, salesmen and religious leaders.

If our attitudes are so much a matter of the immediate choices of the moment, and yet if they are so important in our decisions and behavior, what is the relationship between ephemeral, momentary postures and important, far-reaching consequences? We may best understand this as we study the relationship between attitudes and emotions.

Attitudes and Emotions

Whereas our attitudes, although influenced by the past, are primarily a choice of the moment, our emotions are reaction *potentials* which are stored deeply within the psychic mechanisms of our being. Emotions form throughout the course of incarnations in the earth plane. How does emotion affect attitude? The choice of the attitude is like the

selection of a key to a storehouse. The power of the mind's imaginative forces enables us, in making a momentary choice of a certain key, to enter into a profound space within ourselves. There is a very special way in which *the mind as the builder* activates the response potentials of the body and opens the storehouses of karmic patterns. Thus an attitude dwelt upon by the mind turns the key in the lock to open the expression of deeply stored emotions.

The attitude or point of view that we choose defines the nature of our relationship to ourselves, to others or to the world about us. Here is the way it works: Almost any stimulus may become an occasion for a personal response. It may be an offhand comment of a friend, an item in the daily news or the recall of an event in our past. Let's take one example. Let's say we hear an item of news about the world situation. How we respond initially is a *choice*. We may experience the news as a call to prayer, to some positive action, or as a personal threat. If we choose to respond positively, we may experience a greater sense of closeness to the Divine, a greater sense of personal worth and well-being and a reassurance about the future of the world. On the other hand, if we choose to view the item of news as a personal threat, we feel estranged, impotent and pessimistic.

The body's major physiological response systems are related to the endocrine glands and the physiological action of their hormonal secretions. As the mind dwells upon an attitude, it awakens appropriate responses in the body's emotional system, the endocrine glands. These glands are known to students of the Edgar Cayce readings as the seven spiritual centers and as storehouses of karmic memories and patterns. We may think of them as collections of prerecorded tapes that have been accumulating throughout countless experiences of many incarnations.

When these storehouses are opened, whole complex potentials may begin to manifest in our

lives. These may be seen in the development of a certain relationship with another person, the unfolding of a magnificent talent or the course of a serious disease. These previously stored patterns and potentials are brought into manifestation in our conscious feelings and actions by the mind's imaginative forces. As the mind dwells upon a certain attitude, the physiology of the body follows the representation in the mind. Then, the responses of the endocrine glands instruct the rest of the body to function appropriately to the emotional patterns being awakened. The seven endocrine glands and their hormonal secretions orchestrate the responses of every cell, perhaps every atom, of the body. If the expressions of these patterns are out of harmony with the normal functioning of the physiological forces of the body, then disorder in our lives and disease in our bodies will inevitably follow.

There are innumerable influences all about us which we may permit to affect our attitudes, and these attitudes may trigger the deepest of our emotional patterns. However, *we* may take charge of our own mind in the same manner and with equal or greater ease. In so doing we take charge of our emotions and of our choices which affect ourselves and others about us so deeply. We may find ourselves and our lives tossed about like corks on a stormy sea unless we have stabilized our responses to those influences.

A Place to Stand

For the attitude to be constant in the face of the influences which would claim its focus, there must be established something within our lives which is stable and to which we may direct our consciousnesses to return. The setting of the ideal, therefore, constitutes the construction of a stable place upon which to stand, a firm foundation for every subsequent attitude or viewpoint. The ultimate place to stand is in the fully established ideal of all that is most richly meant by a *belief in and love of God*. When we say that we believe in God, we *should* not only be indicating an orientation of the intellect but also affirming our deepest attitude toward the nature of reality. A *belief in God* should ultimately mean that we are *affirming good*, that we know there is only one force at work in the universe and that force is good. From this viewpoint we are always aware that the ultimate truth is that the force at work in all manifestations is ultimately moving toward that which is good.

The ideal of good, or God, or love of God—as expressed in the great commandment to love God with all our hearts, minds and souls and our neighbor as ourselves—is presented in the readings as the ultimate answer for all the problems of mankind. As an ideal, the love of God establishes a singleness of intent and purpose as the motivating spirit of our lives. Here is a

foundation upon which to stand with respect to attitudes regarding ourselves and all other persons and conditions.

Attitudes and Ideals

The following formula is given frequently in the readings: The spirit is the life, mind is the builder, the physical is the result. The manner in which we may work with this formula with respect to attitudes is as follows: In working with "the spirit is the life" concept, we are told that the most important experience for any entity is to know what is the ideal spiritually. Setting the ideal is setting the *spirit in which we intend to respond to all of life*. The ideal becomes our stabilizer.

The "mind is the builder" works with the *attitude* level. As we set the mental ideal, we are instructed to specify the attitude that is awakened within us by the spiritual ideal and with respect to ourselves and others, persons and conditions. Then, in regard to "the physical is the result," the physical ideal relates to the ideal course of action or application to bring into manifestation the mental attitude which grows out of the spiritual ideal.

As we dwell upon the spiritual ideal, a foundation is built upon which we may develop constructive attitudes toward all phases of our lives. These, in turn, lead to applications consistent with these attitudes and with the spiritual ideal. The mind as the builder is truly the creator of our bodies and our experiences both here and hereafter. We become what the mind dwells upon, both in body and in soul. Now with the choice of the attitude—the orientation toward the circumstance of the moment—we set the mind to work with all of its imaginative, creative and mantric potentials. In answer to this divine quality of the mind, the deepest physiological responses and potentials within the body may be called forth.

The attitude upon which we dwell becomes the mantra of the moment. The mantra, as a mind tool, is the way in which the key is turned to open the storehouses of all of our previous emotional experiences in the earth. Therefore, it is the attitude we hold that turns the key to open sources either of karma or of grace. It is of the utmost importance that we choose, in the *nowness* and the momentary focal point of consciousness, attitudes that are consistent with the highest ideal that we have set.

Ideals and Ideas

It is of the utmost importance that we learn in our very deepest responses the difference between *ideas* and *ideals*. We may not all have the same *ideas* but we can and must have the same *ideals*. Often in failing to differentiate between these we sometimes hear others expressing ideas different from our own and we become anxious, thinking

that because the *ideas* are different therefore the *ideals* are different. Consider how serious this state of affairs is! Because another does not agree with our *idea*, we suspect his *ideals*, his *motives*, his *intent*. Consequently, we may experience our best friends and co-workers, even our loved ones, as *enemies* when we fail to make this differentiation between ideas and ideals!

One tragic form of this is seen when individuals in a single family or members of organizations disagree regarding religious ideas. When someone else dares to differ from us in *ideas* we may become so suspect of his *ideals* that we attribute his efforts to do good as deceptions of the devil. I think it probable that few things make the Lord more sad than to see those who love Him most, those who hold the same ideal, fighting among themselves because of discrepant ideas.

Focusing on different ideas leads to polarization of attitudes. Focusing on ideals enables us to see the Christ even in our enemies.

Choose Life

The attitude of the moment is the most immediately accessible expression of man as a spiritual being. Here is the point at which spirit, mind and will, the three attributes of the soul, come into an immediate focal point of expression. When the ideal is set and held, it quickens the spirit and predisposes it to right purposes. With the will we choose that upon which the mind is to dwell in relationship to our ideals. The mind as the creator and builder begins to awaken emotional responses within the body and behavioral patterns toward others that bring the qualities dwelt upon into manifestation in our bodies and in the environment about us.

The stimulus to creativity is an orientation toward life or death—toward that which will bring into manifestation and give and enhance *life*, or toward that which will cut us off from the source of all life. Just as with the will we choose the attitude; in turn, the attitude affects subsequent decisions. These decisions, given manifestation in our actions and behavior and in what we manifest in our relationships with others, create emotions. Do our attitudes and emotions turn us toward life or death?

Attitudes are not only *held* but *maintained*, not in a static but in a dynamic sense. The stability of attitudes from one day to the next or one year to the next grows out of holding certain postures or orientations toward ourselves and those about us. For example, we may maintain an attitude by collecting grievances or grudges. We collect them with respect to ourselves, other persons, situations, our government, the world. Then as we come to entertain a condition, we find ourselves responding toward it in terms of the grievances collected. Thus a negative attitude is *maintained*. With the simple introduction of another

consideration of a person or condition, we may immediately generate a new attitude. For example, for years we may have held a grudge against a certain person; however, the minute we are willing to acknowledge the Divine or try to see the Christ in that other person, all of the previously held grievances may immediately drop away. Subsequently, we find ourselves in an attitude of grace instead of karma with respect to that person or situation; in turn, our behavior can change completely, becoming alive and creative.

Examples and Applications

For a better understanding of the way in which the Edgar Cayce readings approach the importance of attitude and the precise manner in which it affects the physical body, the following may be studied carefully:

Q-1. *In the reading of June 3rd, it says my mental condition is paramount. Explain this in the light of how I may help my physical ailment...*

A-1. The explanation in this is as this: In every physical being, the whole body is made up of the atomic forces of the system, with the mind of each atom, as it is builded, supervised by the whole mental mind of the body, varied by its different phases and attributes, for, as is seen in its analyses, an atom of the body is a whole universe in itself, in the minutest state. The attitude, then, of all the attributes of the mind toward self, and the forces as manifest through same, become then paramount. As to any healing in a body, or *any application* of any source, nature, character, kind, or condition, is only to create that incentive *in* that same atomic force to create the better condition in a body, whether it be medicinal properties, whether it be of manipulation to induce incentive reaction, whether it be of an operative nature, or whatnot, is to create that same condition in the atomic forces of the body to bring about the better physical conditions in the system. Then, necessarily, [the attitude] is paramount. How to go about to apply same? May be through self and self's attitude towards those conditions which are of the physical and spiritual natures in an individual, and to this individual especially. As has *often* been given, these become *more* paramount in *this* individual than of the ordinary.

137-81

The readings not only indicate that attitudes affect the body's physical conditions, but they also specifically describe the effects that certain attitudes have upon the body. For example:

To be sure, attitudes oft influence the physical conditions of the body. No one can hate his neighbor and not have stomach or liver trouble. No one can be jealous and allow the anger of same and not have upset digestion or heart disorder.

4021-1

Of the more than 14,000 readings given by Edgar Cayce, over 8,000 of these are physical

readings. It may be more accurate to say that nearly all of these are physical, mental and spiritual readings. The physical readings began with an invitation to the individual to change his attitude about himself and the life about him.

Yes, as we find, conditions are not good here. Much of these may be aided, but unless there is change in the approach to healing, what will be the application of same?

All healing comes from the Divine within, that is creative. Thus, if one would correct physical or mental disturbances, it is necessary to change the attitude and to let the life forces become constructive and not destructive. Hate, malice and jealousy only create poisons within the minds, souls and bodies of people. 3312-1

The special relationship between attitudes and disease and the necessity for changing attitudes with respect to spiritual ideals is indicated in the following:

As we find, then, we would give that first, in making for corrections, there must be a change of attitude—towards self, those about self, and the conditions which the body physically and mentally has found and does find around self.

Resentments, animosities, petty jealousies and the like must be eliminated as much as practical and possible, *if* there will be the better physical force, the better mental and physical reaction.

This as we find may best be done by the body analyzing itself. Consider: What is thy ideal? What is thy purpose?

And when considering the ideal, know that this—spiritually, mentally, materially—must find its basis of activity in spirituality—that is, prompted by the desire to do something that is constructive in the very physical forces and physical relationships.

Do not consider so much what others should do for or to you, but what will you do for and towards others? 1889-1

The special role of attitudes in healing is indicated in the following examples:

There is much more to be obtained from the right mental attitude respecting circumstances of either physical, mental or spiritual than by the use of properties, things or conditions outside of self, unless these are in accord with the attitudes of the body. 5211-1

But when the body allows itself to become aggravated or anxious, or to tax the body, this can undo in a few minutes as much as may be accomplished in some time in building up.

Then, keep the mental attitude correct also. 2866-2

The following example indicates the special way in which the attitude and ideals or purposes must work together.

Much has been given as respecting the attitudes of individuals. Hard for individuals at times to get that necessary understanding that *purposes and*

aims and desires that are of material nature may often defeat purposes that are claimed as spiritual natures, but when these are coordinated, most anything may be accomplished. Then keep in the attitude as has been given, in a way that will bring for each an understanding of things material, things spiritual and things that would live, that would give life, that would give hope, must be spiritual in their inception. [Author's italics]

3812-15

Some of the most destructive of our attitudes relate to that type of self-concern that has its beginning in doubt and fear. The following reading indicates the seriousness of this orientation.

Fear is the root of most of the ills of mankind, whether of self, or of what others think of self, or what self will appear to others. To overcome fear is to fill the mental, spiritual being, with that which wholly casts out fear; that is, as the love that is manifest in the world through Him who gave Himself the ransom for many. Such love, such faith, such understanding, casts out fear. Be ye not fearful; for that thou sowest, that thou must reap. Be more mindful of that sown! 5459-3

On the other hand, those attitudes most to be sought are characterized by the expression, "the fruits of the spirit."

Remember—let every purpose, every desire, every hope be tempered with the spirit of truth; sowing only the seed of the spirit—love, kindness, patience. Those things bring into the experience not that of longfacedness, not those forces that would hinder from finding real joy. For remember—He is God of love, for He *is* love. He is God of joy, for He *is* joy; a God of happiness, for He *is* happiness! And only those forces that are in the nature of fear and doubt, and hate and jealousy and such, bring those influences that are destructive or disappointing in the experience. 2403-1

Let us therefore more deeply affirm this attitude toward the Universe: our Creator is a God of *love*, of *joy*, of *happiness*. As we set our ideal "to make manifest our love of God and man," we awaken the ultimate emotion and we have the most stable place possible from which to view all of our experiences. If we view the Universe with this attitude, we will ever see the Universe smiling back.

Herbert Bruce Puryear

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